THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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PRESS RELEASE

MILTON ROGOVIN PHOTOGRAPHS: PORTRAITS REVISITED
March 11 - May 22, 1988

More than twenty black-and-white photographs by Milton Rogovin, an optometrist known for his telling portraits of ethnic and blue-collar residents of his native Buffalo, will be exhibited at The Cleveland Museum of Art March 11 through May 22, 1988.

In the early 1970's, Rogovin photographed families and individuals living in a transitional neighborhood near his optometry office. His series, "Lower West Side," portrays in sharply focused images the individuals behind the impersonal social, economic, and ethnic stereotypes that so often are applied to entire neighborhoods. More than a decade later, Rogovin made portraits of the same persons. Several of these later images, from a series titled "Lower West Side--Revisited," are paired with the earlier portraits.

Unlike those documentary photographers who distance themselves from their subjects by capturing a fleeting moment on film, Rogovin clearly is sympathetic to and has the consent of his subjects, who often collaborate by wearing a favorite outfit or selecting a specific setting in their home. The resulting images have a sincerity and intimacy that is unsettling.

Images from Rogovin's "Working People" series of the late 1970's, for which he photographed individuals at work and at leisure, express a dichotomy of self images that is often startling and sometimes tender. These pairs will be shown next to portraits taken of the same people several years later, after they had been laid off from the jobs depicted in the previous photographs.

Curator of Contemporary Art Tom Hinson organized the exhibition. All of the works were lent by the artist.